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alitis semipalmatus, *Æ. montanus*, both of which species, as already noticed, are omitted from the list, though it is hard to suppose that in either case he could have mistaken the one bird for the other.

While faunal lists of the birds of the western states and territories are so very desirable, they more than defeat their usefulness unless prepared with a considerable degree of accuracy. If the writer of the present list had restricted it to a smaller locality, say for instance a single county, and had added from his note books more explicit data, especially in respect to the times of arrival and departure of the birds, his catalogue would have had far more value as a faunal record, and would doubtless have been as a whole much more accurate.—J. A. A.

NEWTON'S ORNITHOLOGICAL REGISTER.*—The pamphlet before us is a description of a Record of Ornithological Observations made by Messrs. A. and E. Newton for the years 1850-'59. Great advantage flows from a continuous series of such observations in any department of Natural History, and the system devised and perfected for this purpose seems to us very praiseworthy. It is difficult to gain an idea of this unique register without inspection of an accompanying lithographic sheet representing a month's record in *fac-simile*; but it will suffice to say that the record is kept almost entirely by means of a few simple but expressive symbols, the use and purport of which may be readily learned. By these signs a day's observations may be duly recorded in a few moments, and the system recommends itself for this if for no other reason. Prof. Newton says that the benefits accruing were "out of all proportion" to the time and trouble bestowed; and not the least of these, was the enforcing of a habit of close daily observation, essential to the culture of practical ornithology. Many extremely valuable, and some novel, facts were ascertained respecting the movements, the pairing, nesting, singing of birds, and their general habits. It was unexpectedly discovered, among other things, that the meteorological observations made in the hope that one set of observations might throw light on the other, gave negative results, no birds proving reliable weather-prophets. We should judge that the digestion of the great mass of material accumulated in this

*On a Method of Registering Natural History Observations. By Alfred Newton. From the Norfolk and Norwich Society's Proceedings, 1870.

way would be a matter of much time and care, but the same is true of observations recorded in the usual manner.

We wish that a number of copies of this interesting brochure could be placed on sale at the Naturalists' Agency, so that our ornithologists might have the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the merits of the record, and consider the propriety of adopting the system. — E. C.

BOTANY.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMPOSITÆ. — Mr. G. Bentham read a paper on this subject at two recent meetings of the Linnean Society, in continuation of his paper on the structure of the same order of plants (*Academy*, vol. iii. p. 73). The genera and species of this largest order of flowering plants are about equally distributed between the Old and New World; of the genera about 410 are found in the former and 430 in the latter; of species, about 4400 in the Old World and a rather larger number in the New. Not quite 70 species are common to the two hemispheres, and these mostly belong to the extreme northern regions; a few are common to New Zealand and Antarctic America; not more than a dozen tropical species are found in both the Old and New World, and some of these are coast plants. The form which Mr. Bentham looks on as prototypic, and possibly ancestral to the whole order, includes a few closely allied genera, distinguished by their regular corolla, belonging rather more to the American than the Old World distribution, being found in Chili, with an outlying genus in St. Helena. Other types, apparently of great antiquity, are found in Africa, Australia, and Western America. Since the separation of the Indo-Malayan and Australian regions from one another, there appears to have been a continuity of races of Compositæ across the tropics from south to north. The paper, which enters exhaustively into the distribution of the various tribes and more important genera, will be published in the "Journal of the Linnean Society." — *Academy*.

THE COLORING MATTER OF FUNGI. — Mr. W. C. Sorby has communicated to "Nature" a series of observations on the coloring matters of the fungi found in his own neighborhood (Sheffield in Yorkshire). So far he has been able to determine, by means of their optical and other properties, the existence of at least thirty distinct coloring matters, and he believes the number will be eventually larger. The majority of fungi contain at least two